

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1579

To appropriately limit the use of riot control agents.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 12, 2021

Mr. KAINE introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred
to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To appropriately limit the use of riot control agents.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Preventing the Misuse
5 of Tear Gas Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Riot control agents are heavily regulated on
9 the battlefield and have been banned by the inter-
10 national community under the Convention on the
11 Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stock-
12 piling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their

1 Destruction, done at Geneva September 3, 1992,
2 and entered into force April 29, 1997 (commonly re-
3 ferred to as the “Chemical Weapons Convention”).

4 (2) The Centers for Disease Control and Pre-
5 vention recognize that exposure to riot control
6 agents can impose both immediate and long term
7 health effects, including blindness, glaucoma, cata-
8 racts, asthma, burns, and respiratory failure possibly
9 resulting in death.

10 (3) Riot control agents cause respiratory dis-
11 tress and pose particular challenges in urban com-
12 munities, and among minority populations, where
13 incidences of respiratory illness are disproportion-
14 ately high.

15 (4) Riot control agents cause respiratory dis-
16 tress and pose significant challenges during the
17 COVID–19 pandemic due to the damage that the
18 pandemic has inflicted to respiratory systems of mil-
19 lions of people.

20 (5) If the use of riot control agents is regulated
21 on the battlefield, their indiscriminate use against ci-
22 vilian populations should not be allowed.

23 (6) Limiting the use of riot control agents to
24 stop violent behavior can be a valid strategy to de-

1 escalate violence and avoid greater use of force by
2 law enforcement.

3 (7) In particular, riot control agents should not
4 be deployed against persons behaving peacefully.

5 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

6 In this Act:

7 (1) **LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.**—The term
8 “law enforcement officer”—

9 (A) means any officer of the United
10 States, a State, or a unit of local government,
11 who is empowered by law to conduct investiga-
12 tions of, or make arrests because of, offenses
13 against the United States, the District of Co-
14 lumbia, a State, or a political subdivision of a
15 State; and

16 (B) includes a member of the Armed
17 Forces (including any reserve component) under
18 orders to act in a policing capacity in the
19 United States.

20 (2) **RIOT CONTROL AGENT.**—The term “riot
21 control agent”—

22 (A) means any chemical that—

23 (i) is not included on any schedule of
24 chemicals contained in the Annex on
25 Chemicals of the Convention on the Prohi-

1 bition of the Development, Production,
 2 Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons
 3 and on their Destruction, done at Geneva
 4 September 3, 1992, and entered into force
 5 April 29, 1997 (commonly referred to as
 6 the “Chemical Weapons Convention”); and

7 (ii) can produce rapidly in humans
 8 sensory irritation or disabling physical ef-
 9 fects which disappear within a short time
 10 following termination of exposure; and

11 (B) includes the chemical compounds 2-
 12 chlorobenzalmalononitrile, chloroacetophenone,
 13 and oleoresin capsicum.

14 (3) VIOLENT ACTIVITY.—The term “violent ac-
 15 tivity” means activity causing physical injury to per-
 16 sons or serious property damage.

17 **SEC. 4. USE OF FORCE STANDARD RELATED TO THE USE**
 18 **OF RIOT CONTROL AGENTS.**

19 (a) FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ON USE OF
 20 FORCE POLICY REQUIREMENT.—Beginning with the first
 21 fiscal year that begins after the date of enactment of this
 22 Act, all Federal law enforcement agencies shall have in
 23 effect a clear set of policies related to the use of force
 24 that clearly states that—

1 (1) the use of riot control agents or similar irri-
 2 tants should be avoided wherever possible against
 3 non-violent civilians and only deployed to stop vio-
 4 lent activity; and

5 (2) the use of riot control agents or similar irri-
 6 tants to quell violent activity should be directed in
 7 way that minimizes any impact on those not partici-
 8 pating in the violent activity.

9 (b) STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT USE OF
 10 FORCE REQUIREMENT.—Beginning with the first fiscal
 11 year that begins after the date of enactment of this Act,
 12 in order to be eligible to receive funds under subpart 1
 13 of part E of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and
 14 Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10151 et seq.) and
 15 part Q of title I of such Act (34 U.S.C. 10381 et seq.),
 16 a State or unit of local government shall have in effect
 17 a law or policy, and be in substantial compliance with such
 18 law or policy, establishing use of force standards for law
 19 enforcement officers that clearly state that—

20 (1) the use of riot control agents or similar irri-
 21 tants should be avoided wherever possible against
 22 non-violent civilians and only deployed to stop vio-
 23 lent activity; and

24 (2) the use of riot control agents or similar irri-
 25 tants to quell violent activity should be directed in

- 1 way that minimizes any impact on those not partici-
- 2 pating in the violent activity.

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